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ABSTRACT

Based on the ideas of participants at a Native American youth conference, this document sets out an agenda to bring about a new future for Native American youth by the year 2000. The agenda presents 12 interrelated goals concerned with the development of a stronger, more self-reliant Native American society. Several strategies for action are suggested for each goal. The goals are to: (1) reaffirm spirituality as the guiding force for healing in Native America; (2) instill within Native American youth the knowledge and desire to live in unity with themselves and the world; (3) teach youth to understand, respect, and be responsible for the environment; (4) instill in Native American youth a greater understanding and respect for their rich and unique heritage; (5) teach youth about sovereignty and its importance in achieving Native American goals; (6) strengthen and support the family; (7) recognize the worth of each individual in the community; (8) provide each individual with the opportunity to attain a quality education; (9) promote the mental and physical health of each individual; (10) build a sound economy to support individuals, tribes, and communities; (11) promote lifestyles of sobriety; and (12) promote community service as a necessary part of an individual's life. (SV)

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The Healing Generation's

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Journey to the Year 2000

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The Healing Generation's

. . . the National Agenda

for

American Indian/Alaska Native Youth

Journey to the Year 2000

SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE · SOLIDARITY · FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY · SERVICE ·

THE HEALING GENERATION

Young people at a recent Native American youth conference were challenged most poignantly by A. David Lester, Executive Director of the Council of Energy Resource Tribes: ***". . . Let it be said of you, that your generation is 'the healing generation' . . . Let it be so that we, the Native peoples of this great land, may take our rightful place, and contribute to the economic and cultural prosperity of all Americans."***

The challenge was accepted. American Indian and Alaska Native youth, joined by many others who see the need for a new way to design the future, developed this agenda, this ***journey.*** It calls for an approach to bring about a new future for Native American youth by the year 2000.

An agenda usually lists ***actions*** to be completed in a given period of time. This one represents paths for a *journey* to be completed by the year 2000. It was designed primarily by those it will affect — the youth. This ***journey*** is for those who know the destination is worth reaching. ***JOIN*** the healing generation as families, as friends, as tribes and as communities on this ***journey*** to ***make a difference.***

Let us travel together for this common purpose, to join in the healing process so . . . ***"that we, the Native peoples of this great land may take our rightful place and contribute to the economic and cultural prosperity of all Americans."***

THE JOURNEY TO THE YEAR 2000

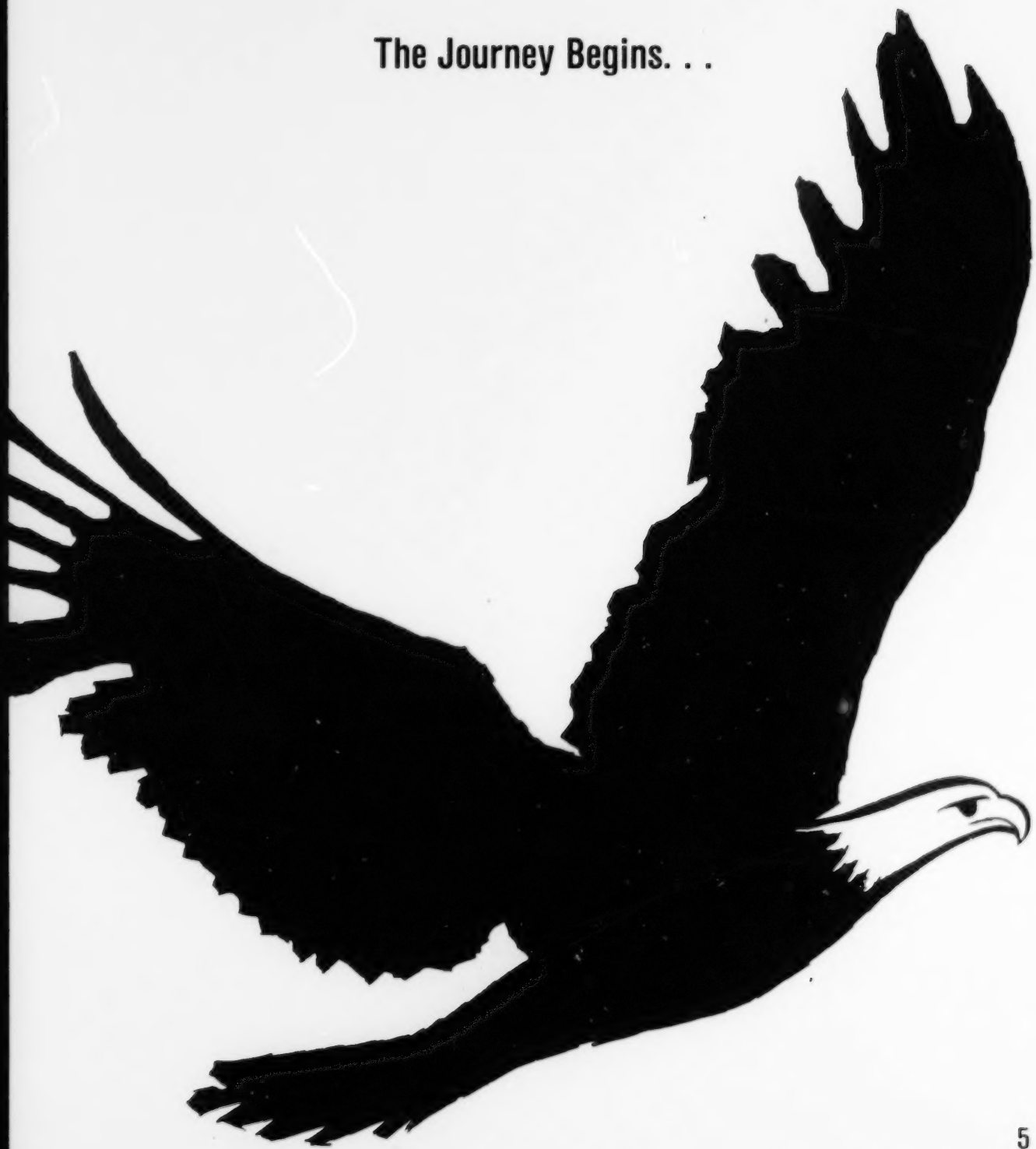
This Native American Youth Agenda has twelve interrelated paths to be taken toward the year 2000 as a conscious commitment to our youth from a new perspective, one that is not measured in economic terms alone or values and desires of others.

Joining the youth as "the healing generation" we have the means — the commitment, the spiritual resources, the wisdom and the desire — to build a stronger, more self-reliant Native American society for them by the year 2000. With this accomplished, the new century will become the period of realization of our full potential and taking our rightful place in the world community.

This ***JOURNEY TO THE YEAR 2000*** requires careful planning and well thought out strategies to succeed. These twelve goals emerged from the participation of hundreds of Native American youth and their supporters. This is what they said they want. The suggested strategies also emerged, but these are just a beginning. Creatively develop your own, address your own situation but carefully take into account the values and traditions that the youth asked to learn.

As you succeed at each step, reach back with a helping hand to the others who are also on this ***journey.*** Help each other along the way. In this way of sharing, as has been so eloquently stated by Phil Lane, Jr., Coordinator of the Four Worlds Development Project, ***"the hurt of one is truly the hurt of all; the honor of one is truly the honor of all."***

The Journey Begins. . .



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The Journey Continues:

SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE · SOVEREIGNTY · FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY · SERVICE ·
Spirituality is the heartbeat of Native America. The cultivation and expression of our spiritual selves enable us to tap our creativity and sustain our efforts toward completion.

Spirituality

TO REAFFIRM OUR SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality will be our guiding force to bring about healing within Native America. By practicing the unique Native American spiritual values, our youth will be able to realize their unlimited potential.

We will:

- guide our youth as they discover and develop their spirituality.
- share the wisdom of our ancestors.
- teach our youth the meaning of the Circle of Life.
- teach our youth to heal themselves first and in turn, to share the healing process with others.
- honor the diverse spiritual beliefs of others and
- teach our youth how to develop their own visions.

The Journey Continues:

SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE · SOVEREIGNTY · FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY · SERVICE ·
Unifying efforts will help our youth recognize the strengths and diversities of individuals, communities, tribes and nations, thus generating harmony and cohesiveness from within.

Unity

TO INSTILL WITHIN OUR YOUTH THE KNOWLEDGE AND DESIRE TO LIVE IN UNITY WITH THEMSELVES AND THE WORLD

We must unite and work together toward the common causes of peace, cooperation and harmony. We must unite to bring about the healing of ourselves, our families and our tribes, villages and communities.

We will:

- network with others who share a common purpose.
- promote understanding and cooperation through improved intra- and intercultural communications.
- form talking circles to discuss and share mutual concerns.
- establish family, school and community support groups.
- plan and conduct intergenerational activities to bring about a greater understanding between youth and elders.
- demonstrate by personal example our respect for self and others and
- reawaken the spirit of community and our role as community members.

The Journey Continues:

ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE · SOVEREIGNTY · FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY · SERVICE · SPIRITUALITY · UNITY ·
For the sake of all future generations, it is our responsibility to protect the environment. We must insure that there will be clean air, pure water and land, free of toxic pollutants.

Environment

TO TEACH OUR YOUTH TO HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING, RESPECT AND A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Following the teachings of our elders and ancestors, youth will be instructed in the tradition of protecting the environment of planet earth. The development of natural resources must be compatible with the environment, and related decisions must be made with a thorough understanding of the environmental consequences.

We will:

- enhance the traditional image of awareness and concern for the earth's environment.
- revere and teach respect for all creation.
- create a public awareness concerning decisions which may affect the environment.
- reaffirm our responsibility to protect and restore Mother Earth.
- seek to strike a balance with the needs to develop natural resources and the needs to protect the environment and
- find ways to improve the environment.

The Journey Continues:

HERITAGE · SOVEREIGNTY · FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY · SERVICE · SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT ·
A greater knowledge and appreciation
of our heritage will develop the pride, dignity
and confidence for Native Americans to
successfully meet the challenges
of the next century.

Heritage

TO INSTILL IN OUR YOUTH A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF AND RESPECT FOR THEIR RICH AND UNIQUE HERITAGE

Native American cultural values and traditions strengthen and give us a sense of belonging and self-esteem. They also guide us as we prepare for our roles in the larger society.

We will:

- seek the counsel of our elders and draw from their wisdom.
- value our heritage by teaching our youth about their own respective cultures.
- promote pride in being the first people of this nation, and determine what this means in terms of our roles and responsibilities.
- plan and conduct events to educate and develop cultural appreciation.
- share knowledge of our cultural heritage with others for understanding and information.
- preserve our respective traditional languages and
- teach our youth our traditional values and how to use them in today's society.

The Journey Continues:

SOVEREIGNTY · FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY · SERVICE · SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE ·

Greater knowledge and active participation in the efforts to exercise our sovereignty will insure that, as Native Americans, we will control our own future.

Sovereignty

TO TEACH OUR YOUTH ABOUT SOVEREIGNTY AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN ACHIEVING NATIVE AMERICAN GOALS

The future well-being of Native Americans, who live on reservations and in Alaska Native villages, will depend in great part on the role of the tribal and village governments. Sovereign rights and responsibilities form the foundation of our tribal and village governments and of our efforts to take responsibility for our own destiny.

We will:

- teach our youth about our sovereign rights and responsibilities.
- teach our youth about the basis, form and operation of tribal and village governments.
- familiarize ourselves with relevant treaties and special legislation affecting tribes, Native villages and corporations.
- network to exchange information useful in developing strategies for addressing local problems.
- participate in the decision making processes and promote actions to address local concerns and
- establish youth councils through which our youth can gain, share and exercise valuable knowledge about tribal government responsibilities and operations.

The Journey Continues:

FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY · SERVICE · SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE · SOVEREIGNTY ·
The protection and nurturing of the family is of paramount importance. Strong families build strong individuals and communities. The foundation of the Native American society must be the family.

Family

TO STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT THE FAMILY

The family is the basic unit where an individual learns personal, social and cultural values. The family protects, nurtures and prepares the individual for life. A strong family produces strong, self-assured and caring individuals who, in turn, help shape their communities in ways which reflect these desired attitudes and values.

We will:

- conduct an inventory of the strengths and weaknesses of our respective families.
- improve communications among all family members.
- work within the families to identify and address problems which weaken the family unit.
- work with tribal and village governments, urban centers and youth councils to establish family counseling and support programs for troubled families.
- work with local schools to implement courses to teach our youth about the moral responsibilities and consequences of their actions.
- plan and conduct family oriented activities.
- work with local government agencies to augment and strengthen their programs to combat the problems which weaken the family.
- increase the participation and involvement of parents in the schools and other youth activities and
- network with concerned others to organize support groups for troubled youth.

The Journey Continues:

INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY · SERVICE · SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE · SOVEREIGNTY · FAMILY ·
The strength of each tribe, village and community is derived from the strength of its individual members. As each individual becomes stronger, Native America becomes stronger.

Individual

TO RECOGNIZE THE WORTH OF EACH INDIVIDUAL IN THE COMMUNITY

Each individual within a tribe, village or community is a unique gift of the Creator. Our challenge is to assist each individual in the community to reach his/her full potential, and then involve that person in community building.

We will:

- assist each individual in finding his/her special purpose in life.
- guide our youth as they develop spiritually, mentally, physically and socially.
- build the self-esteem of each individual.
- organize local programs to encourage and support the growth of individuals in a variety of endeavors such as the arts, academics and athletics.
- provide a voice for our youth at every level — locally, statewide, nationally and internationally.
- teach our youth the value of honesty and integrity in their dealings with others.
- seek the advice of our youth in developing solutions to community problems.
- build a caring community to support and nurture each individual.
- respect the uniqueness of each individual and
- allocate adequate resources for providing personal development training for our youth.

The Journey Continues:

EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY · SERVICE · SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE · SOVEREIGNTY · FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL ·

The future success of Native America will depend in large part on the availability of educated individuals who are capable of working in two cultures. Those who understand the economic and social needs of their communities and who can balance these needs with the culture of their respective tribe or village will be the leaders in the move toward self-sufficiency.

Education

TO PROVIDE EACH INDIVIDUAL WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTAIN A QUALITY EDUCATION

Increasing the educational attainment of our people is of utmost importance to the future growth, development and well-being of Native America. We must insure that our youth receive a quality education at every level.

We will:

- participate in the education of our youth by becoming aware of what they are learning and what needs to be augmented by the family, elders and others.
- develop accurate literature and history about Native Americans and insure that it is available to our youth.
- teach our youth the value of education, and encourage them to strive for excellence in their academic pursuits.
- work with local schools, educational organizations and concerned others to establish counseling programs which provide information about scholarships, grants, university support programs and careers.
- work with our tribal, village, state and federal governments to insure that adequate financial resources are allocated to meet the educational needs of our youth.
- organize public awareness programs to recognize the academic achievements of our youth.
- organize a campaign to improve the literacy level of our youth and other community members.

The Journey Continues:

HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY · SERVICE · SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE · SOVEREIGNTY · FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION ·
Those who are mentally and physically healthy are more capable to meet the complex challenges of life which lie ahead.
It is of fundamental importance that the health of Native Americans be protected because a healthy community is better prepared to meet the challenges it faces.

Health

TO PROMOTE THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH OF EACH INDIVIDUAL

Strengthening the mental and physical health of our youth will enable them to successfully meet the challenges they will face in assuming the responsibilities of self. family. tribe and community. We must take the necessary steps to insure our youth are strong in mind and body.

We will:

- teach our youth the balance and relationship between physical. mental and spiritual well-being.
- serve as positive role models by adopting lifestyles based on sound health and wellness principles.
- teach our youth how to control their own mental and physical health.
- gather information regarding the existing health levels in our communities to guide us in planning for the physical and mental fitness of our youth.
- teach our youth the value of physical fitness. sports and leisure activities.
- involve parents and youth in programs to teach them about the role of proper diet and nutrition in disease prevention.
- provide our youth with information about AIDS. teen pregnancy. substance abuse. weight control. sexuality and fitness and
- organize and conduct programs to heighten community awareness about diseases and preventative practices.

The Journey Continues:

A vigorous economy is vital to the future growth and development of Native America. We must take charge of our own destiny by moving ourselves, our tribes, our villages and our communities toward economic self-sufficiency.

Economy

TO BUILD A SOUND ECONOMY TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS, TRIBES AND COMMUNITIES

Those who live on reservations and in Alaska villages must have jobs to support themselves and their families. Adequate employment opportunities will strengthen the social fabric of our communities.

We will:

- work with our local schools to develop more courses in business and economics.
- encourage active participation in free enterprise.
- utilize Native Americans who are successful in business as role models.
- organize and conduct job fairs to help our youth find employment.
- establish job placement programs for our youth.
- promote entrepreneurial efforts among our youth.
- support the efforts of Tribal Employment Rights Offices.
- include our youth in economic development planning and strategy sessions.
- plan and conduct small business seminars.
- teach our youth how to choose and prepare for careers which match their aptitudes and abilities and
- identify and develop economic opportunities in our communities.

The Journey Continues:

SOBRIETY · SERVICE · SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE · SOVEREIGNTY · FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY ·
Conquering alcohol and substance abuse
and all the related problems
will restore the spirit of Native America.
This must be done if we are to achieve
economic and social self-sufficiency.

Sobriety

TO PROMOTE LIFESTYLES OF SOBRIETY

A conscious commitment must be made at all levels in our communities to adopt lifestyles free of substance abuse by dealing openly and aggressively with the issues of denial, co-dependency and supply. We cannot sustain the high cost in loss of useful lives of Native Americans.

We will:

- inventory our schools and communities to find the degree of substance abuse and the kinds of substances being used, and identify the suppliers.
- stop the distribution of alcohol and drugs to our youth.
- focus on prevention through utilizing healthy role models.
- plan and conduct awareness campaigns to educate our communities about the high social costs resulting from substance abuse.
- conduct chemical free social events for our youth.
- demonstrate, by example, leadership free of substance abuse.
- work with our tribes, villages and communities, along with appropriate agencies, in establishing treatment/ rehabilitation centers where needed.
- establish peer support groups to promote recovery among those who suffer from drug or alcohol addiction.
- design the special facilities and programs for awareness and recovery adapted to our Native American communities.
- set "alcohol-free communities by the year 2000" as one of our highest priorities and
- utilize all available resources to conquer the problems associated with substance abuse.

The Journey Continues:

SERVICE · SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE · SOVEREIGNTY · FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY ·
It is imperative that our youth become actively involved in building our tribes, villages and communities by utilizing some of their time, talents and energy for community service.

Service

TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY SERVICE AS A NECESSARY PART OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE

Strong communities are built on a tradition of cohesion and sharing. The tradition of sharing and serving must be revitalized by placing a responsibility for community service on our youth.

We will:

- teach our youth the traditional concept of servant leadership.
- establish intern programs which allow our youth opportunities to gain valuable experience in leadership and government service.
- develop volunteer programs that will provide our youth with wise use of leisure time in building the community.
- teach our youth their cultural traditions that support community service and help them develop cross cultural understanding.
- establish community service projects as a major component of the youth councils.
- recognize our youth for their time, talents and energy devoted to serving their communities and
- inventory the community to identify individuals who need special assistance or attention and develop community service projects designed to meet those identified needs.

SERVICE · SPIRITUALITY · UNITY · ENVIRONMENT · HERITAGE · SOVEREIGNTY · FAMILY · INDIVIDUAL · EDUCATION · HEALTH · ECONOMY · SOBRIETY ·

THIS JOURNEY ENDS — WITH A NEW BEGINNING

This ***JOURNEY***, the healing generation's journey, ends in the year 2000. From now until then, by linking in a great sacred circle the values and traditions of spirituality, unity, the environment, our heritage, sovereignty, our families, individuals, education, health, our economies, sobriety and service, we will arrive with strong, self-reliant American Indian and Alaska Native communities in which our youth can flourish.

Then, it will be time to undertake a new ***JOURNEY*** — one of realization; one undertaken with pride and strength; one in which our youth will be in their rightful place in this great land and where indeed, the ***"honor of one shall be the honor of all."***

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thank you, all the contributors, for the many hours you have given as "**the healing generation**" so that we could develop this agenda.

As you take this journey, please contribute again — share your journey with us. Write and tell us what you have done, will do, how you have used this agenda, what your journey entails, how you define yourselves as "**the healing generation**", and the progress you make toward where you want to be by the year 2000.

Honor your fellow travelers with your reports, your stories and your successes so that we may all share in the experience.

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